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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 1414
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 6124
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 2102
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 8125
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0505
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 1815
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001508

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV EAGR GM IT UK FR
SUBJECT: PM FUKUDA BEGINS EUROPE TRIP

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer per 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: PM Fukuda began a five-day trip to Europe June 1, with meetings scheduled with his German, British, French and Italian counterparts, as well as an address to the Food and Agricultural Organization's food security conference and talks with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. During his stops in Berlin, London and Rome, the PM is expected to focus on climate change, food security and other global issues. Another key reason for the PM's trip -- the last window before hosting the G8 summit July 7-9 -- is to get to know his European G8 counterparts before welcoming them to Japan. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda departed June 1 for a five-day trip to Europe that is to include a summit with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on June 1, a meeting with British PM Gordon Brown in London on June 2 and meetings with Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi and French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Rome on June 3. While in Rome, Fukuda will also address the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food security conference and on June 4 will meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

¶3. (C) Prior to departing from Tokyo, Fukuda told the press that he hoped to focus the discussions with his G8 counterparts on trade and economics, climate change, food security and "other global issues." In particular, he planned to "discuss how we can cooperate in addressing global warming and set a clear direction." As one MOFA contact informed us, the PM is also eager to meet his G8 counterparts prior to welcoming them to Lake Toya July 7-9. Due to the Diet's turbulent schedule over the last several months, it has been difficult for the PM to find time to get away from Japan, and "this window was his last chance to meet his counterparts," our contact explained.

¶4. (C) The reaction in the press here so far as been muted, with coverage limited to matter-of-fact details gleaned from MOFA's press releases. According to one media contact, "perhaps Fukuda will get some coverage from his FAO address; otherwise, there hasn't been much for us to report."

SCHIEFFER